

The United Church of Canada
Bathurst Pastoral Charge
First United Church, Bathurst
www.firstunited-bathurst.ca

December 13, 2020

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** - Martha Vickers
OfficeAdm Margaret Payne-Chenard **Greeters** - Cheryl & Dave Brewster
Custodian - Steve White

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<u>Lectionary for Today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Psalm 126	Luke 1:46b-55
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	Romans 16:25-27
John 1:6-8, 19-28	Luke 1:26-38

*The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where the congregation is invited to stand as able.*

This morning we welcome Isabel and John Clouston as guest vocalists. Thank you for sharing your gift of music!

GATHERING

MUSIC AS WE GATHER

WELCOME

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING –Joy (responsively) Grace Larsen
& Gary Branch

We are three-quarters of the way through Advent.

In the last two weeks, we've lit the candles of hope and peace. (*Light the first two candles.*)

... Joy is the theme of this day.

What does joy look like?

...“when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy” (Job 38:7).

What does joy feel like?

...Joy feels like the wonderful surprise that keeps us from sleepwalking through our lives and waits for us at the end of our days.

What is it like to live in joy?

...Joy will sing with angels and with the out-of-tune person sitting beside you.

Today we light the candle named Joy. May its light help us find our way.

(The Joy candle is lit.)

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP

MV # 220

“Hope Shines as the Solitary Star”

Joy shines as the solitary star.

Faith is the inner light.

***You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
and illumine the pathway home.***

CALL TO WORSHIP (*responsively*)

The Spirit is upon us.

All of us have been anointed to be bringers of comfort and good news.

Some of us are discouraged, others are broken-hearted.

Some of us are joyful and filled with laughter; others of us long for better circumstances.

Restore us, Holy One, to each other and to you.

As we comfort one another and celebrate the good news, we remember we're not alone. That God's with us and for us.

GATHERING PRAYER

GATHERING HYMN "Make a Joyful Noise" VU # 820

Refrain:

*Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!*

Know that your God has made you.
Know it's to God we belong.
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise.
Worship your God with a song!

Refrain

Enter these gates, thanks giving.
Enter these courts with praise.
Sing thanks to your God and bless the holy Name.
Worship your God with a song!

Refrain

Ages through endless ages,
seasons of endless years,
the love of our Maker ever shall endure.
Worship your God with a song!

Refrain

PRAYER OF HUMILITY

CHORAL RESPONSE

***Breathe into this moment of peace
with courage to let go, daring to dream.
For the days are surely coming
when we'll rise strong together once again in peace.***

***GREETING ONE ANOTHER** (*responsively*)

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

SHARING A STORY (*with those of all ages*)

SINGING A SONG – Oh come little children

O come, little children, O come one and all,
To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small,
God's son for a gift has been sent you this night
To be your redeemer, your joy and delight.

He's born in a stable for you and for me,
Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,
In swaddling clothes lying so meek and so mild,
And purer than angels the heavenly Child.

See Mary and Joseph, with love beaming eyes,
Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies,
The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love
While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Grace Larsen & Gary Branch
 John 1:6-8, 19-28
 Psalm 126

REFLECTION**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

GIFT OF MUSIC "Mary's Boy Child" *John & Isabel Clouston*

RESPONDING

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Bev Murphy

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

***OFFERING PRAYER** *(in unison)*

**The prayers we offer, the gifts we give, Holy One,
 are like seeds sown in trust
 that your love will water them
 and bring new life, hope, and joy
 to those who weep.
 Amen**

SHARING OUR CONCERNS

***O come, O come, Emmanuel
 Refresh us at your life-giving well.
 All people long to feel your grace.
 Pour out your Spirit on every place.
 Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel,
 shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.***

(Tune: Veni Emmanuel, VU 1) (The Gathering A/C/E 2020/21)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *(based on Isaiah 61)*

THE LORD'S PRAYER – VU #921 (Ecumenical Version) *(in unison)*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
 now and for ever.
 Amen.**

GOING OUT (as God's people)

ANNOUNCEMENTS**CLOSING HYMN**

"Joy to the World"

VU # 59

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
 let earth receive her King!
 Let every heart prepare him room,
 and heaven and nature sing,
 and heaven and nature sing,
 and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns:
 let all their songs employ,
 while fields and floods,
 rocks, hills and plains
 repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat the sounding joy
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

BLESSING

CHORAL SENDING FORTH - MV # 221
"I am Walking a Path of Peace"

***I am walking a path of joy
I am walking a path of joy
I am walking a path of joy
lead me home, lead me home.***

(The Candles are extinguished.)

Church News

Christmas Eve worship services will be held on December 23, 2020 at 7:00 pm and December 24, 2020 at 4:00 pm Please register with the office prior to the service you wish to attend.

Just a reminder that you need to register at the church office before 1:00 pm each Friday for the following Sunday's service.

Please note the office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, closed for lunch from 12:00 to 12:30.

Peanut Butter Update To date, 461 jars have been collected and \$1090.00 towards the purchase of Peanut Butter has been given to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Peanut butter can be dropped off at the church office anytime during office hours; cheques can be delivered or mailed to the Bathurst Volunteer Center at 464 King Ave., Bathurst NB E2A 1P5. Please indicate on your cheque that it is for the purchase of Peanut Butter for the First United contribution.

Annual Christmas Benevolence Fund: It's that time of year! Giving to this fund is even more important than ever because of COVID-19. Things will be a bit different, but we hope the results will be the same as other years. Should you wish to give, please place your donation in an envelope and drop it in the offering plate, or drop it off at the Church or mail to First United Church, 309 St. Patrick Street, Bathurst N.B, E2A 1E2. Make your cheques payable to First United Church. Please mark clearly that this donation is for the Benevolence Fund. The proceeds from this fund support the Bathurst Volunteer Center and people in our congregation who need assistance.
We thank you for your generosity.
Community Outreach Sub-Team

Poinsettia Fund: Once again this year we are hoping to have the beauty of our sanctuary enhanced with poinsettias for the Christmas season. Those wishing to contribute to the annual poinsettia fund may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fund with your name, PAR or envelope number. List the names that you wish to have printed in the Christmas bulletin insert. Donations will also be received in the church office – deadline is December 14, 2020.

Even though White Gift Sunday is past we will be accepting **White Gifts of non-perishable food items until December 20th**. Every little donation helps those less fortunate and is much appreciated.

John 1:6-8
New Revised Standard Version

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

John 1:19-28

The Testimony of John the Baptist

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."^[a] ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,^[b] nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Psalms 126
New Revised Standard Version

Psalms 126

A Harvest of Joy

A Song of Ascents.

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,^[a]
we were like those who dream.

²Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.

⁵May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.